



Signet future-proofs its warehouse operations with Zebra's industrial wearable computers

Australian-owned and operated by the Winson group, Signet is one of Australia's leading distributors of warehouse consumables, packaging, safety and cleaning supplies with six distribution centres Australia-wide. Known for delivering customer excellence for more than 50 years, Signet dispatches just over 6,000 orders for businesses every day. Its customers benefit from low prices, bulk-buy discounts and the convenience of products always being in stock and delivered on time.

Challenge

With more than 6,000 products stocked to suit a range of industries, Signet needed a way to standardise its day-to-day picking across its distribution centres, while solving the issue of Microsoft 'end-of-life' support for Windows embedded handheld devices.

More than 20 staff at Signet used handheld mobile computers to pick and scan cartons. These devices presented no immediate problem, aside from the potential for picking errors and the manual handling strain through task repetition and picking of heavy items. But more importantly, they relied on a Windows enterprise operating system that would no longer be supported after January 2020, exposing Signet to potential data security risk.

'End-of-life' technology presents an industry-wide challenge, as tens of thousands of devices relying on a Windows operating system will need to be upgraded to Android by 2020. In coming to terms with this disruption, Signet also had to factor in how changing an operating system would affect productivity, particularly as staff become familiar with new systems and processes. Equipped with the right solution, Signet could increase pick times and volume, giving them a critical edge in a competitive industry.

SUMMARY

Customer
Signet

Partner
Insignia

Industry
Warehousing

Challenge
To standardise its day-to-day picking across its distribution centres, while solving the issue of 'end-of-life' technology.

Solution
Android-based industrial wearable computers – WT6000 and RS4000

- Results**
- A safer working environment
 - Improved time-in-motion analysis with 6 seconds time saving per carton, 8.3 hours saved per week and an operations annual saving of \$67,000
 - Improved worker productivity by 40%
 - Future proofing fleet and protecting backend systems
 - Protection against future security threats



Solution

Faced with a fundamental challenge to its core business operations, and as part of its drive to continually increase efficiency, Signet ran a time-in-motion study to determine what efficiencies could be gained by upgrading its technology. Working in close collaboration with its sister company, Insignia, Signet selected Zebra's Android-based industrial wearable computers: WT6000 and RS4000 to support the rollout. These devices mount onto the wrist and finger, allowing workers to have both hands free during the picking process.

Insignia was confident in calling on Zebra's collaborative, customer-committed expertise to quickly scope, develop, test and rollout the new solution:

“We have a very strong partnership with Zebra and rely on their technology to be best in class, so we can offer the right solutions for our customers”, said Matthew Mooyman, product Manager at Insignia.

The first deployment was rolled out in January 2019 across four Signet distribution centres, with the remaining two rolled out by the end of the year.

Running on an Android operating system, the WT6000 is smaller and lighter than other wearables in the market, fitting comfortably on every worker and on any size arm. When worn with the small and lightweight RS4000 1D Bluetooth ring scanner, workers are free to keep their hands and eyes on the items they are handling.

Results

The new wearable hands-free devices brought a 40% reduction in the picking times for the warehouse workers, which translated to an operations annual saving of \$67,000.

“The use of wearable scanning and mobile computing technology has significantly improved our efficiencies, time to pick orders and picking accuracy. The solution allows staff to have both hands free whilst picking orders, reducing risk of manual handling incidents. On average, this has saved each operator around 8.3 hours a week and an operations annual saving of \$67,000”, commented Notley.

“With Zebra's Android-based industrial wearable computers, we have an exceptionally powerful and easy-to-use device. It has radically improved staff efficiency, allowing our teams to complete tasks on the floor at a much faster rate.”

Allen Notley
Warehouse Manager (QLD)
Signet



SUCCESS STORY
SIGNET

In addition to reducing the potential for physical strain, the solution was supported by Zebra All-Touch Terminal Emulation (TE), powered by Ivanti (formerly Wavelink). This provides an easy-to-use interface, that future-proofs Signet's fleet changes without any changes to their back-end warehouse management systems.

Most importantly, feedback from the warehouse staff has been very positive. One of Signet's Warehouse operators commented:

"The wearables are far easier to use and save time per pick, while the old handheld type scanners are difficult to hold while picking, we regularly leave them behind and lose more time."



Comfort to Hands-Free Mobility

The WT6000 Android wearable computer sets a standard for enterprise-class wearability. It's smaller and lighter than other wearables on the market. And with the incredible mounting system, the WT6000 fits comfortably on every worker, on any size arm. Its industrial rugged design delivers maximum uptime in your most demanding environments. The WT6000 — putting the wearable in industrial wearable computing.

For more information visit www.zebra.com



Asia-Pacific Headquarters | +65 6858 0722 | contact.apac@zebra.com

ZEBRA and the stylized Zebra head are trademarks of Zebra Technologies Corp., registered in many jurisdictions worldwide. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. ©2020 Zebra Technologies Corp. and/or its affiliates. All rights reserved.